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TAGS: [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: (C) REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON NEW PANEL
TO DISCUSS COLLECTIVE SECURITY (C-AL7-00700)

REF: STATE 47924

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C/NF) The following is embassy Tokyo's response to Reftel request for insights into Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's proposed Panel on Collective Security (Note: The embassy comments are keyed to reftel questions):

1A. (C/NF) WHO ELSE WILL SERVE ON THE PANEL ASIDE FROM THOSE LISTED IN PRESS? (SHUNJI YANAI, SATOSHI MORIMOTO, KAZUHISA OGAWA, AND HISAHICO OKAZAKI HAVE BEEN MENTIONED IN THE PRESS.)

(C/NF) The full list of members is expected to be announced by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki on or about April 24 (between the April 22 election and before the April 26-27 Summit meeting). Members are likely to include many of the same names that were involved with compiling draft legislation to create a Japanese National Security Council (NSC). NSC Panel member Morimoto confirmed to Tokyo embassy officers that he has been asked to join the panel. Morimoto expressed concern that no active duty SDF personnel appear to be on the list, although he has heard that former Joint Staff Chairman Tetsuya Nishimoto will be a member. MOFA and Ministry of Defense (MOD) officials involved in the issue say that neither agency has been consulted on the panel's make-up or mission.

1B. (C/NF) WHY IS ABE FOCUSING ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY NOW? IS HIS INTENTION TO SHOW ACTION ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY AS A DELIVERABLE AT THE SUMMIT OR DOES HE ASSESS THAT THERE IS A REAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CHANGES?

(C/NF) Panel members tell the Embassy that the announcement of the start of the panel is, in fact, linked to the Summit schedule. Nevertheless, the panel is scheduled to announce its findings soon after the July 22 Upper House election in order to take advantage of an anticipated window for action in the latter half of 2007. The panel's recommendations may be incorporated into a draft bill governing the overseas dispatch of the SDF and, perhaps, additional revisions to the Basic SDF Law. MOFA National Security Division Director Jun Shinmi noted that the Prime Minister's Office has instructed MOFA and MOD not/not to engage with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) group drafting Permanent SDF Dispatch legislation. Shinmi added, however, that MOFA fully expects this injunction to be lifted soon after the July 22 Upper House election in order to prepare a joint government-LDP draft SDF Dispatch Law for submission during the January, 2008 Diet session.

1C. (C/NF) IN DECEMBER 2006, ANALYSTS HAD LIMITED REPORTING SUGGESTING THAT ABE WAS PREPARED TO REINTERPRET THE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY BUT BACKED DOWN BECAUSE THE HEAD OF THE CABINET LEGISLATIVE BUREAU (CLB) WAS OPPOSED TO THE PLAN. IS THERE ANY INDICATION THAT THE CLB HAS CHANGED ITS POSITION AND NOW SUPPORTS REINTERPRETATION OR

IS ABE CALCULATING THAT HE CAN PROCEED WITHOUT CLB APPROVAL?

(C/NF) MOFA Administrative Vice Minister Shotaro Yachi hinted at action on constitutional reinterpretation by the end of December to visiting U.S. officials. A number of MOFA Foreign Policy and North American Affairs Bureau officials have cautioned Embassy Tokyo, however, that Yachi has personally underestimated the potential bureaucratic and political backlash, especially from Komeito and the CLB, if the PM attempts to make a sudden uncoordinated change in the official interpretation of Article 9.

(C/NF) By the same token, creation of an external "wise men's" group to offer suggestions on various scenarios is unlikely to cross any immediate CLB or Komeito redlines. The CLB will probably only assert itself when and if the PM moves to act on the panel's recommendations.

1D. (C/NF) WHERE ARE THE KEY POINTS OF OPPOSITION TO ABE'S EFFORTS TO PERMIT COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND COULD THEY AGAIN CAUSE HIM TO STEP BACK FROM REINTERPRETATION? DOES ABE HAVE SUPPORT WITHIN LDP? IS COALITION PARTNER KOMEITO SUPPORTIVE?

(C/NF) PM Abe will likely face resistance from four different groups within his governing coalition as he moves ahead with his Panel:

-- Traditionalists: Within both the LDP and MOD there are those who oppose changing the fundamental formula under which the U.S. and Japan cooperate on defense matters. In the LDP, this group consists mostly of dovish elements that have largely been sidelined within the party power structure. Retired king-maker and power broker Hiromu Nonaka is a member of this group. Sitting Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma also fits squarely in this camp. Within the MOD, there is resistance to the PM's efforts based on both bureaucratic

inertia and concern over the potential impact of change on MOD prerogatives. MOD officials appear especially worried about how the PM's proposed changes on BMD operations may impact on their goal of maintaining an autonomous BMD command and control system.

-- Komeito: Komeito Defense Division Director and Diet member Tetsuo Sato asserted recently that "95 percent" of Komeito politicians oppose any reinterpretation of Article 9. Nevertheless, Komeito is likely to support PM Abe's efforts within certain limits. Abe will benefit from the groundwork done by longtime Komeito Secretary General and current Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation Tetsuzo Fuyushiba. Over the past two years, Fuyushiba has carefully cultivated a creative interpretation of "Individual Self-Defense" that would permit Japan to conduct seamless combined military operations without changing or "reinterpreting" the constitution. Under this concept, Japan could react to threats against U.S. territories or military assets, including from ballistic missiles, as long as Japanese forces were operating in the "Far East," as defined in the Mutual Security Treaty. Fuyushiba told the embassy last September that, in Komeito's view, this encompasses areas north of the Philippines "including Taiwan and Korea." Fuyushiba explained that an attack against the U.S. or its military forces in the region would harm Japan's national security. By this reasoning, defending the U.S. from shared threats is logically an exercise in Japan's own self-defense.

While the party has not publicly endorsed this view, there is a good chance that it would support at least the first two of the four scenarios under review by the Panel based on Fuyushiba's formula after the Upper House election.

-- LDP Conservatives: Some MOFA and LDP officials warn Embassy Tokyo that Abe's biggest challenge on collective self-defense may come from the right-wing within the LDP. MOFA SOFA Division Director Osamu Iizawa asserted that there is growing opposition to reinterpretation from LDP conservatives who fear that "fixing" problems through reinterpretation will undermine the logic for more sweeping constitutional revision. This argument is boosted by a

faction within the LDP's defense caucus, including LDP Defense Division Deputy Director Shigenobu Tamura, that maintains that half-measures like reinterpreting collective self-defense will only delay more fundamental changes needed to empower Japan's military to fulfill its core missions.

-- LDP Pragmatists: Although sympathetic to the PM's objectives, many younger members of the LDP's defense caucus, particularly former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba, question Abe's understanding of the issues and ability to enforce fundamental change. Ishiba regularly challenges the concept that a simple reinterpretation will suffice to change how U.S. and Japanese forces work together. He has drafted several pieces of legislation that will explicitly authorize the SDF to operate under all four of the scenarios under consideration by the Panel. Without specific legislative authority, Ishiba has told Embassy officers, any major policy shift will unlikely be translated into changes at the operational level. LDP defense caucus member Yasukazu Hamada has also privately raised concerns with the "positive" approach the PM has chosen to expand the SDF's ability to cooperate with the U.S. Hamada asserted that SDF commanders should be told what they are not permitted to do under Japan's constitution, and thus given the flexibility to respond in all other cases based on the requirements at the time.

SCHIEFFER